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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ES](#)
SUBJECT: FRIENDS OF MAURICIO: FUNES NEEDS YOUR HELP

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) Summary: Leaders of the Friends of Mauricio movement, XXXXXXXXXXXX, told us August 21 the movement is formalizing itself and changing its name to the Citizen Movement for Change. They said Funes is concerned about his personal security, physical security at the Presidential offices, and suspects hard-line FMLN elements are intercepting Funes' and his inner circle's telephone calls. XXXXXXXXXXXX expressed disappointment in the performance of intelligence service chief Eduardo Linares and described the decision making process that led to Manuel Melgar being named Minister for Public Security and Justice (in lieu of FMLN hard-liner Jose Luis Merino.) End Summary.

¶2. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX, told Charge and Emboffs August 21 that the Friends of Mauricio movement was moving to formalize its status and had just selected Funes himself as the President of the (now renamed) Citizen Movement for Change. XXXXXXXXXXXX said there were no immediate plans to convert the Citizen Movement for Change into a political party but did not rule out that possibility. He said the near-term goal of the organization was to accompany President Funes as he governed and to provide him non-FMLN political support during his term. He said the Friends of Mauricio organization in the U.S. would likely move to formalize its status, too.

¶3. (S) XXXXXXXXXXXX said Funes and those in his inner circle were concerned about both his personal security as well as technical security of their communications. XXXXXXXXXXXX also lamented the state of physical security around Casa Presidencial, the presidential office compound. XXXXXXXXXXXX said he suspected elements in the (left-wing) FMLN were monitoring phone calls of the President, XXXXXXXXXXXX, and other non-FMLN members of the Government. XXXXXXXXXXXX said Funes would welcome U.S. assistance in both areas. Charge offered to arrange a meeting with Funes and appropriate Embassy staff; XXXXXXXXXXXX

¶4. (S) XXXXXXXXXXXX said he and the President were disappointed in the new Director of the Salvadoran State Intelligence Organization (OIE), Eduardo Linares (aka Douglas Santamaria). Despite high hopes initially, XXXXXXXXXXXX said almost three months into the Funes administration, he was still not receiving daily briefings from OIE. He recounted other instances where he felt Funes was ill-served by the OIE under Linares, including the surprise arrival of substantial numbers of protesters at Casa Presidencial, complete with portable toilets, with no advance warning. In another case, in the days following Zelaya's expulsion from Honduras, Venezuela FM Maduro arrived in a BRV plane in San Salvador, met with senior, hard-line elements of the FMLN, and OIE never reported this XXXXXXXXXXXX. (Note: XXXXXXXXXXXX learned of the visit from a confidante at the airport.)

¶5. (S) XXXXXXXXXXXX also expressed hope that the USG would be able to provide assistance for blocking mobile phone transmissions from Salvadoran prisons; Charge pointed out that assistance would be available, too, but through different channels, much of it part of Plan Merida. However, he said, the complicating factor remained Minister of Public Security and Justice Manuel Melgar. Charge said we expect to receive

shortly instructions to meet with Funes on the subject. XXXXXXXXXXXXX said Melgar's appointment was not taken to display any disrespect to the U.S., but had been a compromise with the FMLN, which had sought appointment of FMLN hard-liner Jose Luis Merino (aka Ramiro Vasquez) as Public Security Minister.

¶16. (S) Funes, he said, had pushed back and preferred to name Melgar to that position because he had developed a certain rapport with Melgar during the campaign. XXXXXXXXXXXXX described Melgar's behavior around Funes during the campaign as compliant and loyal to Funes, characteristics he said would not have been the case with Merino. XXXXXXXXXXXXX said Funes would consider new information on Melgar and take appropriate action, fully cognizant of Melgar's linkage to the 1985 Zona Rosa killings.

¶17. (S) Comment: The message from XXXXXXXXXXXXX on behalf of Funes was clear: we have great confidence in the USG, real security concerns, and need your help. XXXXXXXXXXXXX

¶18. (S) Comment continued: The stress of the bifurcated Funes/FMLN relationship continues to manifest itself in the GOES. While mediocre performance by two FMLN members in key positions may provide Funes the pretext for a cabinet shuffle, it does not guarantee the FMLN will take their removal lying down. FMLN leaders are likely to demand that their quota of positions in the GOES remain stable, and have shown their ability to be disruptive when they don't get their way.
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